

THE FESTIVAL OF ADONIS  
THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS



THE FESTIVAL OF ADONIS  
EING THE XVth IDYLL of THEOCRITUS  
lited with a revised Greek text, translation and  
rief notes by E. H. Blakeney, M.A.; to which  
added a rendering in English verse of the  
AMENT FOR ADONIS attributed to BION.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

GREEK classical poetry, as we know it, was ushered into the world with the two great epics attributed to Homer; it closed with the pastorals of Theocritus, the last genuinely inspired poet of Hellas, some seven centuries later. The splendid dawn had its counterpart in an exquisite evening glow, ere the shadows were to fall, and the night. Theocritus (says Dr Mackail) did once more for the last time what the artistry of the Greek genius had so often done in its great days: he created, and brought to perfection, a new kind of poetry, which alike in form and substance presented a new pattern of life (1). Others, indeed, wrote mime and pastoral before him; but he made these, in a peculiar degree, his own. Since then he has had imitators but no rivals in his special province. With the instinct of true genius he seized upon a province of art not yet occupied and overcrowded; in those pastorals (2) of his, where his feeling for imaginative beauty and his skill in portraying the charm of country life found free scope, he gave his readers, with delicate precision, something that, alike in its sweetness and its haunting music, the world can never forget. Over all broods an iridescent light: the sun of Greece was not yet sunk below the horizon.

The dates of the poet's birth and death are alike unknown; and the details of his life are scanty. But it is safe to say that he was born some time about the year 300 B.C., at Syracuse; that he was educated in the island of Cos; and that several of his pastorals give evidence of the delights he found there—days and hours spent in happy inter-

(1) Lectures on Greek poetry. “*The true beauty of Theocritus’ world is in the country life of the past*” (Gilbert Murray). “*His rural idylls are no sham pastorals, but true to the sights and sounds of his native Sicily*” (Jebb, Greek Classical Poetry). (2) εἰδύλλια (‘idylls’), *cabinet pictures in verse*.

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The *Adoniazusae*, to give the fifteenth idyll its usual title, is a mime, possibly modelled on some lost mime of Sophron, and full of those realistic touches of common life which we find exemplified in the mimiambi of Herondas (1). It is all natural enough; and the interlude, where the Dirge comes in, has stateliness of diction, despite a certain conventionality of treatment. But then all hymns—whether dirges or thanksgivings—are apt to be conventional.

More beautiful though more florid is the dirge over Adonis attributed to Bion (2) (it may have been written for the same festival referred to by Theocritus). Its touches of extravagance, with their Oriental 'abandon,' suit the theme. As we read, it is easier to understand the words of Ezekiel (viii, 14): "then he brought me to the door of the Lord's house; and behold there sat women weeping for Tam-muz"—a scene made famous by Milton (P.L. i, 446-452):—

‘Thammuz came next behind,  
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured  
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate  
In amorous ditties all a summer’s day,  
While smooth Adonis (3) from his native rock  
Ran purple to the Sea, supposed with blood  
Of Thammuz yearly wounded.’ (4)

(1) *The fourth mime of Herondas and the Adoniazusae bear so close a resemblance to each other that we might have inferred both poets were drawing on the same original: Headlam, Herondas xxiii sqq.* (2) *A younger contemporary of Theocritus. His dirge was used by Shelley in the Adonais.* (3) *Rivers often bore in antiquity the names of deities.* (4) *Cf. M.’s Nativity Ode, 204. Adonis simply means ‘Lord’ (Adon): see Frazer Adonis Attis Osiris vol. I, pp. 9, 11, 20.*

course with kindred spirits, devoted like himself to the art and literature. Later on he returned to his birthplace to receive some recognition from Hiero, the ruler of that city. But these hopes were doomed to be disappointed; and perhaps by rumours that had reached him of the intellectual ferment at Alexandria, he decided to migrate there, some time in the year 270 B.C. It was during his sojourn in that most cosmopolitan of centres that, in all probability, he wrote his *Idylls*, in which he describes, with singular minuteness, a day in the life of the city, on the occasion of the yearly festival held in honour of Adonis, under the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Queen. As we listen to the rapid interchange of talk between the women, Gorgo and Praxinoa (2), or watch them forcing their way through the crowds that flocked to the palace both to witness the spectacle and to hear the 'prima donna' singing the 'Dirges' of the mortuary chapel, we feel ourselves confronted with the teeming life of Alexandria. Men of every race would be there to witness the solemn ritual that commemorated the death of Cypris,—Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, goddess of love and beauty. It is a brilliant scene that Theocritus depicts; and, with clear vision, he has seized on the salient details, making (as it were) a cabinet picture of a memorable occasion.

The poet must soon have tired of an urban existence—the Library, the Museum, the many coloured movements of a royal city—and he withdrew, probably to Cos, to enjoy the saner pleasures of country life and surroundings. In the *Idylls* he has described the sort of society in which he found himself.

(1) A well known patron of poets: see the 17th idyll. (2) Continues the custom with which these two women found their way about Alexandria in accordance with Athenian custom. See Newman, *Politics of Aristotle*, vol. I.

course with kindred spirits, devoted like himself to the pursuits of art and literature. Later on he returned to his birthplace, hoping to receive some recognition from Hiero, the ruler of that delectable city. But these hopes were doomed to be disappointed; and, moved perhaps by rumours that had reached him of the intellectual life and ferment at Alexandria, he decided to migrate there, somewhere about the year 270 B.C. It was during his sojourn in that most cosmopolitan of centres that, in all probability, he wrote his *Adoniazusae*, in which he describes, with singular minuteness, a day in the life of the city, on the occasion of the yearly festival held, in honour of Adonis, under the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus (1) and his Queen. As we listen to the rapid interchange of talk between the two women, Gorgo and Praxinoa (2), or watch them forcing their way through the crowds that flocked to the palace both to witness the spectacle and to hear the 'prima donna' singing the 'Dirge' in front of the mortuary chapel, we feel ourselves confronted with the whole teeming life of Alexandria. Men of every race would be there, to witness the solemn ritual that commemorated the dead lover of Cypris,—Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, goddess of love and all delights. It is a brilliant scene that Theocritus depicts; and, with a poet's clear vision, he has seized on the salient details, making (as it were) a cabinet picture of a memorable occasion.

The poet must soon have tired of an urban existence—the Court, the Library, the Museum, the many coloured movement of the royal city—and he withdrew, probably to Cos, to enjoy the quieter, saner pleasures of country life and surroundings. In the 7th idyll he has described the sort of society in which he found himself there.

(1) A well known patron of poets: see the 17th idyll. (2) Contrast the freedom with which these two women found their way about Alexandria with Athenian custom. See Newman, *Politics of Aristotle*, vol. I. pp. 170 sqq.

The *Adoniazusae*, to give the fifteenth idyll its usual title, is a mime, possibly modelled on some lost mime of Sophron, and full of those realistic touches of common life which we find exemplified in the mimiambi of Herondas (1). It is all natural enough; and the interlude, where the Dirge comes in, has stateliness of diction, despite a certain conventionality of treatment. But then all hymns—whether dirges or thanksgivings—are apt to be conventional.

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Tammuz is the Greek Adonis, a vegetation deity, slain but rising anew to life. A world-old legend, indeed, celebrated with ritual and hymn throughout western Asia. But "mirrored in the glass of Greek mythology," the oriental deity appears as a comely youth beloved by Aphrodite. Killed while hunting a wild boar, Adonis was lamented by the Goddess, and it is her grief that forms the subject of the 'Dirge.'

If we except the *Adoniazusae* and the beautiful little poem known as the 'Distaff,' it is justifiable to assert that the 'gold' of Theocritus is to be found in his lively pastoral verse—verse beloved of Virgil among Roman, and Spenser (and Pope) among English poets, not to mention Milton and Matthew Arnold. He determined the true character of this type of poetry, and perfected the *genre*. Tennyson used to say that, had he written anything as good as the 13th idyll, he might have died content; and it may be noted that Tennyson owed much to the Greek idyllists, as his English idylls prove (1). Indeed Theocritus "has set many echoes ringing in later literature."

At his best, Theocritus is exquisite: that is the one word which is appropriate to that peculiar type of poetry which he cultivated so assiduously. His work—"finished to the finger-nail"—is like the beauty of the Sicilian landscapes which his pencil has immortalized, and lifted into the deathless world of Romance.

(1) Consult Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets*, a book full of subtle and sympathetic appreciation.

## ΣΥΡΑΚΟΥΣΙΑΙ Η ΑΔΩΝΙΑΖΟΥΣΑΙ

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

Ἐνδοι Πραξινόα;

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

Γοργοῖ φίλα, ὡς χρόνῳ, ἔνδοι.

Θαῦμ' ὅτι καὶ νῦν ἔγνθεις ὅρη δίφρον, Εύνόα, αὐτῷ·  
ἔμβαλε καὶ ποτίκρανον.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

ἔχει κάλλιστα.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

καθίζει.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

ῷ τᾶς ἀλεμάτω ψυχᾶς· μόλις ὕμμιν ἐσώθην,  
Πραξινόα, πολλῶ μὲν ὅχλω πολλῶν δὲ τεθρίππων·  
παντῷ κρηπίδεις, παντῷ χλαμυδηφόροι ἄνδρες·  
ά δ' ὁδὸς ἄτρυτος· τὸ δ' ἔκαστάτω ὅσσον ἀποικεῖς.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

ταῦθ' ὁ πάραρος τῆνος· ἐπ' ἔσχατα γᾶς ἔλαβ' ἐνθών  
ἴλεόν, οὐκ οἰκησιν, ὅπως μὴ γείτονες ὅμες  
ἀλλάλαις, ποτ' ἔριν,—φθινερὸν κακόν, αἱὲν ὅμοιος.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

μὴ λέγε τὸν τεὸν ἄνδρα, φίλα, Δίνωνα τοιαῦτα,  
τῷ μικκῷ παρεόντος· ὅρη, γύναι, ὡς ποθορῆ τυ.  
Θάρσει, Ζωπύριον, γλυκερὸν τέκος, οὐ λέγει ἀπφῦν.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

αἰσθάνεται τὸ βρέφος, ναὶ τὰν πότνιαν.

ΓΟΡΓΩ

καλὸς ἀπφῆς.

ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

ἀπφῆς μὰν τῆνος τὰ πρόσαν (λέγομες δὲ πρόσαν θὴν  
‘πάππα, νίτρον καὶ φῦκος ἀπὸ σκανᾶς ἀγοράσδειν’)  
ῆνθε φέρων ἄλας ἄμμιν, ἀντὶ τρισκαιδεκάπτωχυς.

1.

ΓΟΡΓΩ

χώμὸς ταῦτά γ' ἔχει, φθόρος ἀργυρίω, Διοκλείδας.  
ἐπιταδρόχυμως κυνάδας, γραιῖν ἀποτίλματα πηρᾶν,  
πέντε πόκως ἔλαβ' ἔχθες, ἀπαν ρύπον, ἔργον ἐπ' ἔργῳ.  
ἄλλ' ἦθι, τῷ μπέχοντον καὶ τὰν περονατρίδα λάζευ.  
βάμες τῷ βασιλῆος ἐς ἀφνειῶ Πτολεμαίω  
θασόμενοι τὸν Ἀδωνιν· ἀκούω χρῆμα καλόν τι  
κοσμεῖν τὰν βασίλισσαν.

2.

ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ  
ἐν δλβίω δλβια πάντα.

ΓΟΡΓΩ

δὸν εἶδες τῶν εἰπ' ἐσιδοῖσα τὸν τῷ μὴ ἰδόντι.  
ἔρπειν ωρα κ' εἴη.

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ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

ἀεργοῖς αἰὲν ἔορτά.

Εύνόα, αἴρε τὸ νᾶμα καὶ ἐς μέσον, αἰνόδρυπτε,  
θὲς πάλιν. οἱ γαλέαι μαλακῶς χρήζοντι καθεύδειν.  
κινεῦ δή, φέρε θᾶσσον ὕδωρ. ὕδατος πρότερον δεῖ,  
ἄν δὲ σμᾶμα φέρει. δὸς ὅμως. μὴ δὴ πτολύ, λαιστρί·  
ἔγχει ὕδωρ. δύστανε, τί μευ τὸ χιτώνιον ἄρδεις;  
παύε ποχ'. οἴα θεοῖς ἐδόκει τοιαῦτα νένιμματι.  
ἄ κλαξ τᾶς μεγάλας πᾶ λάρνακος; δύδε φέρ' αὐτάν.

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## ΓΟΡΓΩ

Τραξινόα, μάλα τοι τὸ καταπτυχές ἐμπερόναμα  
τοῦτο πρέπει· λέγε μοι πόσσω κατέβα τοι ἀφ' ἵστω;

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## ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

ιὴ μνάσης, Γοργοῖ· πλέον ἀργυρίω καθαρῶ μνᾶν  
ἢ δύο· τοῖς δ' ἔργοις καὶ τὰν ψυχὰν ποτέθηκα.

## ΓΟΡΓΩ

ἱλλὰ κατὰ γνώμαν ἀπέβα τοι.

## ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

τοῦτο κάλ' εἴπεις.

Ἄμπεχονον φέρε μοι καὶ τὰν θολίαν· κατὰ κόσμον  
κμφίθες. οὐκ ἀξῶ τυ, τέκινον. μοριμώ, δάκνει ἵππος.  
ἰάκρυ' ὅσσα θέλεις, χωλὸν δ' οὐ δεῖ τυ γένεσθαι.  
ρπτωμεις. Φρυγία, τὸν μικκὸν παῖσδε λαβθοῖσα,  
τὰν κύν' ἔσω κάλεσον, τὰν αὐλείαν ἀπόκλαξον.—  
ἢ θεοί, ὅσσος ὅχλος· πῶς καί ποκα τοῦτο περᾶσαι  
ιρή τὸ κακόν; μύρμακες ἀνάριθμοι καὶ ἀμετροι.

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γολλά τοι, ὃ Πτολεμαῖε, πεποίηται καλὰ ἔργα,  
ξῶ ἐν ἀθανάτοις ὃ τεκών· οὐδεὶς κακοεργός  
ιαλεῖται τὸν ἴόντα, παρέρπων Αἰγυπτιστί,  
ἴσα πρὶν ἔξ ἀπάτας κεκροτημένοι ἀνδρες ἔπαισδον,  
λλάλοις ὅμαλοί, κακὰ παίγνια, πάντες ἐρινοί.  
δίστα Γοργοῖ, τί γενώμεθα; τοὶ πολεμισταί  
πποι τῶ βασιλῆος. ἀνερ φίλε, μή με πατήσῃς.  
ρθὸς ἀνέστα ὃ πυρρός· ἵδ' ὃς ἄγριος. κυνοθαρσής  
ἰνόα, οὐ φευξῆ; διαχρησεῖται τὸν ἄγοντα.  
ινάθην μεγάλως, ὅτι μοι τὸ βρέφος μένει ἔνδοι.

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### ΓΟΡΓΩ

θάρσει, Πραξινόα· καὶ δὴ γεγενήμεθ' ὅπισθεν,  
τοὶ δ' ἔβαν ἐς χώραν.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

καῦτὰ συναγείρομαι τῇδη.

ἴππον καὶ τὸν ψυχρὸν ὄφιν τὰ μάλιστα δεδοίκω  
ἐκ παιδός. σπεύδωμες· ὅχλος πολὺς ἄμμιν ἐπιρρεῖ.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

ἐξ αὐλᾶς, ὃ μᾶτερ;

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### ΓΡΑΥΣ

ἐγών, ὃ τέκνα.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

παρενθεῖν

εὔμαρές;

### ΓΡΑΥΣ

ἐς Τροίαν πειρώμενοι τὴνθον Ἀχαιοί,  
κάλλισται παίδων, πείρα θὴν πάντα τελεῖται.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

χρησμῶς ἀ πρεσβύτις ἀπώχετο θεσπίζασσα.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

πάντα γυναικες ἵσαντι, καὶ ὃς Ζεὺς ἀγάγεθ' Ἡραν.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

θᾶσσαι, Πραξινόα, περὶ τὰς θύρας ὅσσος ὅμιλος.

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### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

θεσπέσιος. Γοργοῖ, δὸς τὰν χέρα μοι· λαβὲ καὶ τύ,  
Εύνοα, Εύτυχίδος· πότεχ' αὐτῷ μή τι πλαναθῆται.  
πᾶσαι ἄμ' εἰσένθωμες· ἀπρὶξ ἔχευ, Εύνοα, ἄμῶν.  
οἵμοι δειλαία, δίχα μεν τὸ θερίστριον ἥδη  
ἔσχισται, Γοργοῖ. πιοττῶ Διός, εἴ τι γένοιο  
εὐδαίμων, ὕνθρωπε, φυλάσσεο τῷμπέχονόν μεν.

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### ΖΕΝΟΣ

οὐκ ἐπ' ἐμὶν μέν, ὅμως δὲ φυλαξεῦματι.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

δχλος ἄθρως.

διθεῦνθ' ὕσπερ ὕες.

### ΖΕΝΟΣ

θάρσει, γύναι· ἐν καλῷ εἰμές.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

κῆρις ὕρας κῆπειτα, φίλ' ἀνδρῶν, ἐν καλῷ εἴης  
ἄμμε περιστέλλων. χρηστῶ κοίκτιρμονος ἀνδρός.  
φλίβεται Εύνοα ἄμμιν· ὅγ', ώ δειλὰ τύ, βιάζευ.  
κόλλιστ· ἔνδοι πᾶσαι', —ό τὰν νυὸν εἴπ' ἀποκλάξας.

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### ΓΟΡΓΩ

Πραξινόα, πόταγ' ὕδε. τὰ ποικίλα πρᾶτον ἄθρησον,  
λεπτὰ καὶ ὡς χαρίεντα· θεῶν περονάματα φασεῖς.

### ΠΡΑΖΙΝΟΑ

πότνι· Αθαναία, ποιαί σφ' ἐπόνασσαν ἔριθοι,  
ποιοι ζωογράφοι τάκριβέα γράμματ' ἔγραψαν.  
ὧς ἔτυμ' ἔστάκαντι καὶ ὡς ἔτυμ' ἐνδινεῦντι,

80

ἔμψυχ', οὐκ ἐνυφαντά· σοφόν τοι χρῆμ' ἄνθρωπος.  
αὐτὸς δ' ὡς θαητὸς ἐπ' ἀργυρέας κατάκειται  
κλισμῶ, πρᾶτον ἴουλον ἀπὸ κροτάφων καταβάλλων,  
ὅ τριφίλατος Ἀδωνις, ὃ κὴν Ἀχέροντι φιλεῖται.

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ΕΤΕΡΟΣ ΖΕΝΟΣ  
παύσασθ', ὃ δύστονοι, ἀνάνυτα κωτίλλοισαι  
τρυγόνες· ἐκκναισεῦντι πλατειάσδοισαι ἄπαντα.

### ΓΟΡΓΩ

μᾶ, πόθεν ὄνθρωπος; τί δὲ τίν, εἰ κωτίλαι εἰμές;  
πτασάμενος ἐπίτασσε· Συρακοσίαις ἐπιτάσσεις;  
ῶς εἰδῆς καὶ τοῦτο· Κορίνθιαι εἰμὲς ἄνωθεν,  
ῶς καὶ ὁ Βελλεροφῶν· Πελοποννασιστὶ λαλεῦμες·  
δωρίσδεν δ' ἔξεστι, δοκῶ, τοῖς Δωριέσσι.

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ΠΡΑΣΙΝΟΑ  
μὴ φύη, Μελιτῶδες, ὃς ἀμῶν καρτερὸς εἴη—  
πλάνη ἔνός. οὐκ ἀλέγω. μή μοι κενεὰν ἀπομάχησ.

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### ΓΟΡΓΩ

σίγα, Πραξινός· μέλλει τὸν Ἀδωνιν ἀείδειν  
ἀ ταῖς Ἀργείας θυγάτηρ, πολύιδρις ἀοιδός,  
ἄτις καὶ πέρυσιν τὸν ἴαλεμον ἀρίστευσε.  
φθεγξεῖται τι, σάφ' οἶδα, καλόν· διαχρέμπτεται ἦδη.

### ΑΟΙΔΟΣ

Δέσποιν', ἀ Γολγώς τε καὶ Ἰδάλιον ἐφίλασσας  
αἴπεινάν τ' Ἐρύκαν, χρυσωπίζουσ' Ἀφροδίτα,  
οἵον τοι τὸν Ἀδωνιν ἀπ' ἀενάω Ἀχέροντος  
μηνὶ δυωδεκάτῳ μαλακαίποδες ἄγαγον Ὀραι,

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βάρδισται μακάρων<sup>7</sup> ὥραι φίλαι, ἀλλὰ ποθεινάι  
ἔρχονται, πάντεσσι βροτοῖς αἰεὶ τι φέροισσαι. 105  
Κύπρι Διωναία, τὸ μὲν ἀθανάταν ἀπὸ θνατᾶς,  
ἀνθρώπων ὡς μῆθος, ἐποίησας Βερενίκαν,  
ἀμβροσίαν ἐς στῆθος ἀποστάξας γυναικός·  
τὸν δὲ χαριζομένα, πολυώνυμε καὶ πολύναε,  
ά Βερενικεία θυγάτηρ, Ἐλένη εἰκυῖα, 110  
Ἄρσινόα πάντεσσι καλοῖς ἀτιτάλλει "Ἄδωνιν.  
πάρο μὲν οἱ ὥρια κεῖται, ὅσα δρυὸς ἄκρα φέροντι,  
πάρο δ' ἀπαλοὶ κάπποι πεφυλαγμένοι ἐν ταλαρίσκοις  
χρυγυρέοις, Συρίω δὲ μύρω χρύσει ἀλάβαστρα.  
ἴδατά ό δόσσα γυναῖκες ἐπὶ πλαθάνῳ πονέονται, 115  
χνθεα μίσγοισαι λευκῷ παντοῖα μαλεύρῳ,  
ὅσσα τ' ἀπὸ γλυκερῶν μέλιτος τά τ' ἐν ὑγρῷ ἐλαίῳ,  
τάντ' αὐτῷ πετενὰ καὶ ἑρπετὰ τῷδε πάρεστι.  
Γλωραὶ δὲ σκιάδες, μαλακῷ βρίθοισαι ἀνήθῳ,  
ἰέδμανθ<sup>8</sup>· οἱ δέ τε κῶροι ὑπερπωτῶνται "Ἐρωτεις, 120  
ἴοι ἀηδονιδῆς ἐφεζόμενοι ἐπὶ δένδρῳ  
γωτῶνται, πτερύγων πειρώμενοι, ὅζον ἀπ' ὅζω.  
ῷ ἔβενος, ὣ χρυσός, ὣ ἐκ λευκῷ ἐλέφαντος  
ἰετοὶ οἰνοχόον Κρονίδᾳ Διὶ παῖδα φέροντες,  
τορφύρεοι δὲ τάπητες ἀνω μαλακώτεροι ὑπνῳ. 125  
Μίλατος ἔρει χώ τὰν Σαμίαν καταβόσκων  
στρωται κλίνα τῷδώνιδι τῷ καλῷ ἄμά.<sup>9</sup>  
ἀν μὲν Κύπρις ἔχει, τάν δ' ὁ ῥιδόπταχυς "Ἄδωνις  
ἴκτωκαιδεκέτης ἢ ἐννεακαίδεχ<sup>10</sup> ὁ γαμβρός].  
Ὕ κεντεῖ τὸ φίλαμ<sup>11</sup>· ἔτι οἱ περὶ χείλεα πυρρά. 130  
ἀν μάλι Κύπρις ἔχοισα τὸν αὐτᾶς χαιρέτω ἀνδρα·  
ἴθεν δ' ἄμμες νιν ἄμα δρόσῳ ἀθρόαι εἴξω  
σεῦμες ποτὶ κύματ<sup>12</sup> ἐπ' ἀϊόνι πτύοντα·  
ἴσασαι δὲ κόμαν καὶ ἐπὶ σφυρὰ κόλπον ἀνεῖσαι

στήθεσι φαινομένοις λιγυρᾶς ἀρξώμεθ' ἀοιδᾶς.  
 ἔρπεις, ὡ φίλ' Ἀδωνι, καὶ ἐνθάδε κῆς Ἀχέροντα  
 ἀμιθέων, ὡς φαντί, μονώτατος. οὔτ' Ἀγαμέμνων  
 τοῦτ' ἔπαθ' οὔτ' Αἴας ὁ μέγας, βαρυμάνιος ἥρως,  
 οὔτ' Ἐκτωρ, Ἐκάβις ὁ γεραίτατος εἴκαστι παίδων,  
 οὐ Πατροκλῆς, οὐ Πύρρος ἀπὸ Τροίας πάλιν ἐνθών,  
 οὔτ' οἱ ἔτι πρότεροι, Λαπίθαι καὶ Δευκαλίωνες,  
 οὐ Πελοπηγάδαι τε καὶ Ἀργεος ἄκρα Πελασγῶν.  
 Ἰλαθὶ νῦν, φίλ' Ἀδωνι, καὶ ἐς νέωτ' εὐθυμήσαις.  
 καὶ νῦν ἤνθεις, Ἀδωνι, καὶ, ὅκκ' ἀφίκη, φίλος ἥξεῖς.

## ΓΟΡΓΩ

Πραξινόα, τὸ χρῆμα σοφώτερον ἀ θήλεια·  
 ὀλβία ὅσσα ἴσσατι, πανολβία ὡς γλυκυφωνεῖ.  
 ὥρα ὅμως κῆς οἴκου· ὀνάριστος Διοκλείδας.  
 χώνηρ ὅξος ἄπταν, πεινᾶντι δὲ μηδὲ ποτένθης.  
 χαῖρε, Ἀδων ἀγαπατέ· καὶ ἐς χαίροντας ἀφίκευ.

## TO THE READER

The Editor is responsible for the translations of Theocritus and Bion, with the exception of one passage on pp 22-4 which is taken from Calverley's verse rendering. In the constitution of the Greek text of the *Adoniazusae*, the following editions have been consulted: those of Ahrens, Fritzsche, Wordsworth, Cholmeley, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. It is hoped that the notes, brief though they are, will clear up the main difficulties in the poem.

# TRANSLATION

## SCENE I

*Outskirts of Alexandria: a room in Praxinoa's villa. Her maid Eunoa busy at the spinning wheel. Zopyrion, her little boy, at play.*

GORGO (*knocking at the door*) Praxinoa in?

PRAXINOA (*answering the summons*) Yes, Gorgo I am in. What an age since we met! It's surprising you are come even now. Find a chair, Eunoa: put a cushion on it.

GORGO. That'll do nicely.

PRAXINOA. Pray sit down.

GORGO. Fie on me for a gad-about! I've just managed to escape with my life. Such crowds, and such a lot of carriages! Riding-boots and uniforms everywhere. And the way here was endless. My dear, you really live too far off.

PRAXINOA. That's all owing to my mad-cap husband. Why, he came to this other end of nowhere, and rented this hovel—you can't call it a house—just to prevent our being neighbours. Anything for spite: he's always like that, the jealous brute.

GORGO. Don't run down your husband, my dear, in front of the child. Look how he's eyeing you.— All right, Zopyrion, my pet; mother isn't talking about daddy.

PRAXINOA. Gracious, the child understands.

GORGO (*soothingly*) Dear daddy!

PRAXINOA. Well, the other day this daddy of his (only the other day we were saying, 'Dad, do go to the store and buy some rouge and soda')—what must he do but bring back salt, the great oaf.

GORGO. My husband is just the same—a downright squander-maniac. Yesterday, if you please, he paid seven shillings for some worthless fleeces, five of them,—dog-skins, scrapings of old wallets,

mere trash. Trouble piled on trouble. (*Interrupting her flow of reminiscence*) Come, take your shawl and cloak; let's be off to the palace of rich King Ptolemy, to see the *Adonis*; I hear the Queen is staging a magnificent show.

PRAXINOA. Ah, grand folk do things in grand style.

GORGON. Think what a lot you'll have to talk about to your stay-at-home friends. Come along; it's time we were starting.

PRAXINOA. True, it's always holiday-time for folk that don't work. (*To Eunoa*) Pick up your spinning; and leave it about here in the middle of the room, if you dare, you idle hussy! Cats love soft places to lie in. (*Impatiently*) Get a move on, I tell you.—There now! water, and be quick about it: I must have a wash first.—Dear, dear! he brings the soap. No matter, give it to me. (*With growing impatience*) Not too much water, you wasteful creature. Now pour it out. Bad luck to you, you're wetting my dress. Stop! Now, thank the Lord, I've washed my hands. But where's the key of the wardrobe? Fetch it here.

GORGON (*exclaiming*) That bodice, made full, suits you beautifully. Tell me, how much did it cost, straight from the loom?

PRAXINOA (*peevishly*) O don't ask me. More than eight guineas, I sh down. And I worked myself to death over it.

GORGON. Anyhow, it becomes you. Who could want a better?

PRAXINOA. Nice of you to say so.—Eunoa, my shawl and hat; and they sit nicely. (*To Zopyrion*) No, I'm not going, to take you ba. Bogey-man! gee-gee bites! O cry away, then, as much as you :e: I won't have you lamed for life. Now, let's be off. (*To the nurse*) Trygia, take the boy and keep him amused, call the dog in, and ut the door.

*The women leave the house, each attended by her maid.*)

## SCENE II

*The streets of Alexandria, filled with a motley crowd moving in the direction of the King's palace.*

PRAXINOA (*as they reach the square*) My, what a crowd! how and when shall we ever get through this plague of people? They swarm like ants; you can't count them. Ah, Ptolemy, you've done many a good deed since your father went to heaven; no ruffians sidle up to hustle the passer-by, in the old Egyptian way, playing their jokes on folk,—tricky fellows, rascally gangsters,—idle ne'er-do-wells that they are.—My dear Gorgo, what *are* we to do? Here they come, the King's chargers. (*To a by-stander*) My good man, don't tread on my toes.—(*To Gorgo*) Look, that chesnut horse is rearing bolt upright; how vicious he looks! (*To her maid*) Eunoa, you fool, out of the way. That horse will be the death of its groom. Thank goodness, my child is safe indoors.

GORG. All right, Praxinoa. We are well to the rear now; they've moved into line.

PRAXINOA. I feel better now. Since I was a slip of a girl, horses and chilly snakes have given me the shivers. Come along; there's a huge mob surging this way.

GORG. (*to an old woman coming in an opposition direction*) Are you come from the palace, mother?

OLD WOMAN. Yes, m'dear.

GORG. Is it easy to get in?

OLD WOMAN. Well, the Greeks got into Troy by trying, my pretty ladies. Everything succeeds in this world, if you try enough. (*Old woman passes on.*)

GORG. The old girl spoke like an oracle, didn't she? she's gone.

PRAXINOA. Women know everything, yes, even how Zeus married Hera.

GORGO (*the two women have at length reached the palace*) I say, Praxinoa, what a crowd there is about the palace doors.

PRAXINOA. Dreadful! Your hand, Gorgo. And, Eunoa, do you hang on to Eutychis; pay attention to her or you'll be lost. Let us all go in together: hold tight to me, Eunoa. Oh dear, oh dear, my frock's already torn in two. (*To a stranger close by*) For goodness sake, Sir, as you hope for heaven, mind my shawl.

STRANGER.—Sorry: I can't help it. I'll do my best.

PRAXINOA. What a jam there is! the people shove like pigs.

STRANGER. Cheer up. Madam; we're quite all right.

PRAXINOA (*relieved*) And from this day on may it be all right with you, Sir, for looking after us. (*To Eunoa*) What a nice kind man!—We are letting Eunoa be crushed. Force your way in, you goose. Capital! “All serene now,” as the husband said when locked in with his bride.

### SCENE III

*Hall in the palace. Adonis is seen reclining on a bier, decked with fine embroidery.*

GORGO. Praxinoa, do look here. Notice those embroideries, how exquisitely fine they are—vestments fit for the gods, I'm sure.

PRAXINOA. Lady Athena! what hands could have spun such fabrics? what artists drew the designs? So natural, too. How true to life the figures seem to stand, and move about—more like living creatures than needlework. Men are clever things. Yes, and Adonis over there, how marvellous he looks, lying on his silver couch, with the first down on his cheeks—darling Adonis, loved even in death.

SECOND STRANGER (*angrily*) Shut up, you beldames, with your everlasting chitter-chatter—like a pair of turtle-doves. Ugh! they bore me stiff, they and their a, a, a.

GORGO (*turning to Eumea*) Lor', where did *he* come from? (*Indignantly addressing the stranger*) And what's it to you, if we *do* chatter: First buy your slave; then order him about. *We* are Syracusan *ladies*. I'd have you know we were born and bred in Corinth (like Bellerophon himself). We speak Peloponnesian: I suppose Dorians may speak Doric? B'yr lady, no master over me—*save one*: I don't care a fig for you! No skimping of rations for *me*.

GORGO. Hush, Praxinoa. The Argive woman's daughter, a clever singer, is just going to sing *The Dirge for Adonis*. Last year she took the the first prize; and I'm sure she'll give us something first rate to-day. Already she's clearing her throat.

#### THE RITUAL HYMN

Queen, who lov'st Golgi and the Sikel hill  
And Ida, Aphrodite radiant-eyed,  
The stealthy-footed Hours from Acheron's rill  
Brought once again Adonis to thy side—  
How changed in twelve short months! they travel slow,  
Those precious Hours; we hail their advent still,  
For blessings do they bring to all below.  
O sea-born! thou didst erst, or legend lies,  
Shed on a woman's soul thy grace benign  
And Berenice's dust immortalize.  
O called by many names, at many a shrine!  
For thy sweet sake doth Berenice's child  
(Herself a second Helen) deck with all  
That's fair, Adonis. On his right are piled  
Ripe apples fallen from the oak-tree tall;  
And silver caskets at his left support  
Toy-gardens, Syrian scents enshrined in gold  
And alabaster, cakes of every sort

That in their ovens the pastrywomen mould,  
When with white meal they mix all flowers that bloom,  
Oil-cakes and honey-cakes. There stand portrayed  
Each bird, each butterfly; and in the gloom  
Offoliage climbing high, and downward weighed  
By graceful blossoms, do the young Loves play  
Like nightingales, and perch on every tree,  
And flit, to try their wings, from spray to spray.  
Then see the gold, the ebony! only see  
The ivory carven eagles bearing up  
To Zeus the boy who fills his royal cup!  
Soft as a dream, such tapestry gleams o'erhead  
As the Milesian's self would gaze on, charmed.  
But sweet Adonis hath his own sweet bed:  
Next Aphrodite sleeps the roseate-armed,  
A bridegroom of eighteen or nineteen years.  
Kiss the smooth boyish lip—there's no sting there.  
The bride hath found her own: all bliss be hers!  
And him at dewy dawn we'll troop to bear  
Down where the breakers hiss against the shore;  
There, with dishevelled dress and unbound hair,  
Bare-bosomed all, our descendant wild we'll pour:

*“Thou haunt’st, Adonis, earth and heaven in turn,  
Alone of heroes. Agamemnon ne’er  
Could compass this, nor Ajax stout and stern;  
Not Hector, eldest born of her who bare  
Ten sons; not Patrocles, nor, safe-returned  
From Ilion, Pyrrhus, such distinction earned;  
Nor, elder yet, the Lapithae, the sons  
Of Pelops and Deucalion; nor the crown*

*Of Greece, Pelasgians. Gracious may' st thou be,  
Adonis, now; pour new-year's blessings down!*

*Right welcome dost thou come, Adonis dear:  
Come when thou wilt, thou' lt find a welcome here."*

GORGO. A fine piece that. Lucky the woman to have such skill; luckier still to have such a lovely voice. However, it's time to be getting back; my husband hasn't had his supper, and the man is down-right vinegar: catch me going near him when he's hungry.—Farewell, beloved Adonis, even as your coming has made us fare well.

## NOTES

present idyll contains three separate scenes: (1) ladies gossiping  
me; (2) the crowded streets of Alexandria; (3) interior of the  
precincts. Theocritus is indebted to Sophron's *Tai θάμεναι*  
*θμία* (the women watching the Isthmian games). For Sophron  
Orwood's *Greek Comedy*, pp. 77 *sqq.*

χρόνῳ, like ὡς χρόνιος in xiv, 2. Observe that Theocritus has  
chosen the women's names at random; Gorgo is suggestive  
of a certain vixenish character, Praxinoa of the character of one  
only interested in domestic occupations.

Ἵμ' ὅτι: Praxinoa is half disposed to show resentment at her  
husband's long absence.

εμάτω ψυχᾶς: apparently she is out of breath after her long  
travelling—the ὁδὸς ἀτρυτός in l. 7.

χιμδηφόροι: man clad in the rich Macedonian χλαμύς: see  
ib. *Dict.* s.v. CHILAMYS.

τοθ' δ κ.τ.λ., as we might say 'That's my husband all over!'  
ατα γᾶς, viz. somewhere in the suburbs of Alexandria.

πον appears to be a name of Doric origin. For πάραρος in l. 8  
Hom. *Il.* xxiii. 603.

θορῆ: because he does not like to hear his father thus criticized.  
Ἅτνιαν, Persephone. Her cult was popular with the Dorian  
- ἀπτῆς, a child's word (ὑποκόρισμα).

εππα: Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's certain correction of the  
old πάντα. (λέγομες=ἔλεγομεν). δύοράσδειν, infinitive for  
erative.

› fleeces of sheep, but mangy dog-skins. She might have util-  
the former.

πέχονον, a shawl; περονατρίς (=περόνημα), a sleeveless

garment (worn by Dorian women) fastened on the shoulder by a clasp. λάζευ=λαβέ: cf viii 86, λάζεο.

24. βασιλισσαν, Arsinöe: cf 110, 111.

Praxinoa is not yet won over to her friend's scheme for a day out; she, rather indifferently, makes use of an old saw. Gorgo takes her up, quoting (or inventing) another. Praxinoa, not to be outdone in this mild sword-play, and of course wishing to have the last word, chips in thus: 'lazy folk [she glances at G.] always seem on holiday.' ἐν ὅλβιῷ: the preposition is often joined with a genitive by ellipse of οἴκῳ (as in ἐν Ἀδου).

25. A line variously emended. Most editors read ὅν ἴδες ὅν εἴπεις καὶ ἴδοισακ. τ. λ, the relative being put thrice (the second governed by εἴπεις, which is a gnomic aorist: cf ii, 137). Ahrens, ingeniously, ἡνίδ' ἔγών εἴπας κεν . . . ('Here I am,' ready to start).

27. νᾶμα (if correct)=*telam*, the wool-work. ἐς μέσον i.e. carelessly in the middle of the room (instead of in its proper place, the bureau). Note the irritability displayed.

28. γαλέαι: it is generally assumed that the γαλῆ in Greek was nothing but a species of tame marten; this is hard to believe. The γαλῆ was, in all likelihood, a genuine *cat*, though it need not have been like our modern domestic cat. It was natural enough for cats to be in Alexandria, for the Egyptians not only kept them as pets, but worshipped them.

30. σμᾶμα: the girl, rendered nervous by the nagging of her mistress, brings the soap before the water.

36. For this passage see Bentley's dissertation on Phalaris.

37. This might equally well mean 'I have set my heart on it.'

38. κατὰ γνώμαν: Aristoph. *Peace* 940 (this scheme) χωρεῖ κατὰ νοῦν. A common usage: exx. in the papyri, e.g. *P. Petr. II* xii (1).

39,40. θολίον, a straw hat (as a protection against the sun). Μορμό: the mother wants to frighten the child, in order to damp his

ardour for accompanying the women. *Mormo*, the name of a 'bugaboo'; employed by nurses to keep tiresome children quiet: Aristoph. *Birds* 1244; *Acharn.* 582 (Rogers); Ruhnkson's *Timaeus* (s.v.); Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore*, chap. ii § 11.

42. Phrygia was one of the various districts from which slaves were imported: Eurip. *Alc.* 675; Juvenal xi, 147 (Mayor).

45. τὸ κακόν: the crowd. Cf Aristoph. *Birds* 294 ὅστιν κακόν ὀρνέων.

46. ὁ τεκών, Ptolemy Soter, father of the reigning monarch.

47,8. Egypt enjoyed considerable prosperity under the Ptolemies.

The administration was as elaborate as it was strict. But Alexandria seemed to have had a bad name for rowdiness, to judge from Propertius, IV, xi, 33. See Kingsley, *Historical Essays*, for a description of life in that most cosmopolitan of cities.

50. ἔρινοι means 'wild fig-trees.' For fig-tree wood=bad wood, cf Soph. *frag.* 181 (Pearson), and a fragment of Phoenix the iambo-grapher in J. U. Powell's *Collect. Alexandr.* Add Theocr. x, 45.

51. πολεμισταὶ ἵπποι, war-horses led by grooms (τοὺς ἄγοντας, 54).

56,7. καὶ δὴ, like our 'There, then!' with a touch of pettishness. Cf Soph. *Trach.* 345. ἐς χώραν, into position on the parade ground. συναγείρομαι=me colligo.

58. ψυχρὸν ὄψιν: Virgil's *frigidus anguis* (*Ecl. viii*, 72).

64. Cf Plaut. *Trin.* I, ii, 171 sciunt quod Juno fabulata est cum Jove (although, in fact, the wedding of Juno and her consort was a secret from the rest of the gods: Hom. *Il.* xiv 296, *sqq.*).

68. ἀπτριξ, *mordicus*, lit. 'with your teeth.'

72. ἀθρως Doric for ἀθρος, contr. from ἀθρόος.

77. A sort of 'Wellerism' ('now we're all comfortable, as the father said to his little boy when he cut off his head to cure him of squinting').

79. Wordsworth quotes Hom. *Od.* x, 222,3 οἵα θεάων λεπτά τε καὶ

χαρίεντα καὶ ὄγλας ἔργα πέλονται. φασεῖς idiomatic fut. for εἴποις δὲ.

80. Athena was patron-goddess of such fine arts. ἔριθοι, spinning women. σφε=αὐτά.

81,2. The tapestries represented scenes in the amorous adventures of Adonis and his goddess-lover. ἔμψυχα: Propert. IV, ix, 9 gloria Lysippo est animosa effingere signa (=statues). σοφόν τοι κ.τ.λ. Cf opening of the chorus in the *Antigone* (322 *sqq.*). For admiration given to objets d'art see an interesting passage in the 4th Mime of Herondas. Two sacrificers are in the temple of Asclepius; one cries 'Just look at that statue! if it were not at our very feet, you'd say it could speak. In time sculptors will turn marble into living men. And that picture there of a naked boy! the flesh is warm, pulsing with life.' Cf Pope, *Epist.* i: 'marble softened unto life grew warm;' Browning, *Ring and the Book*, viii, 636—641.

88. There was a proverb—τρύγονος λαλίστερος.

90. Another proverbial saying: 'first buy your slave; then order him about' (cf our 'first catch your hare'). Plaut. *Trin.* IV iii 54 emere meliust quo imperes.

91. δῆνωθεν, by descent. Syracuse was a daughter city of Corinth. Syracusans were proud of their origin, and would look down on the Alexandrians as upstarts. *Bellerophon*, a prince of Corinth: for the legends attaching to his name see Apollodorus II, ii.

94. Μελιτῶδες, Persephone.

95. πλάνη ἐνός, King Ptolemy alone excepted. μὴ διπομάξῃς: slaves were put on rations, issued out in bushel-measures and levelled off with a scraper by niggard masters. Cf Theophr. *Char.* xxvi (Jebb): 'the miser will weigh out rations to his household by his own hands with a measure the bottom of which is well dinted in; and he carefully brushes the rim afterwards.' Juvenal xiv, 126 servorum ventres modio castigat iniquo.

99. διαχρέμπεται: So the new Papyrus for the vulgate διαθρύπ-  
τεται (= *fingitur artibus* in Hor. Od. III, vi, 22, Bentley).

100-144. THE DIRGE OVER ADONIS, ending with a nuptial hymn for  
his resurrection, and re-union with Aphrodite.

100-101. Γολγώς, Ἰδάλιον, cities of Cyprus, devoted to the cult of  
Aphrodite. Catullus (lxiv, 96) renders this line 'quaeque regis  
Golgos quaeque Idalium frondosum.' Ἐρύκαν: mount Eryx (in  
Sicily) where was a noted temple of Apollo: Virg. *Aen.* v, 759,  
Tacitus *Ann.* iv, 43.

χρυσωπίζουσ' (for the usual reading χρυσῷ παίζοισ') : so Lud-  
wich. 'With thy face of gold.' Cf χρυσῶπις and καλλωπίζειν.

102. Ἀχέροντος: according to the legend, Adonis was permitted to  
return, for a part of each year, to the upper world, to console his  
goddess-lover.

104. βάρδισται κ.τ.λ. Cf Tennyson (*Love and Duty*): 'the slow  
sweet hours that bring us all things good, The slow sad hours that  
bring us all things ill.' For the connexion of Aphrodite and the  
Hours personified cf. Hom. *Hymn to Aphrodite*, 5.

106. Diône, the reputed mother of Aphrodite: Hom. *Il.* v, 370.

107,8. Berenice, mother of Ptolemy, the reigning King, and of his  
sister-wife Arsinöe. For her deification see *Cambr. Anc. Hist.* vol.  
VII, 705. *Ambrosia*, an elixir conferring immortality: Pind. *Olymp.*  
I, 62 νέκταρ ἀμβροσίαν τε δῶκεν, οἷς μιν ἄφθιτον ἔθεσαν. For  
'ambrosia' as a liquid, see *Class. Rev.* xxxi, 6.

109. πολυώνυμε, dowered with a variety of cult-names. Dionysus,  
for example, is 'many-named,' being variously styled Bacchus,  
Iacchus, Zagreus. Cf Jebb on Soph: *Antig.* 1115.

112. δρύος ἄκρα, the towering oaks.

113. κάπποι, the so-called 'gardens of Adonis,' i.e. pots of flowers  
carried in baskets by women at the Festival. These 'gardens' are  
the personification of Adonis—symbol as he is of the spring

flowers slain by the fierce heat of summer, and passing the rest of the year in the underworld, from which he will at length arise to life. Frazer, *Adonis Attis Osiris* vol. I, chap. x; Lang, *Myth, Ritual & Religion*, vol. ii; Plato, *Phaedr.* 276 (Thompson).

114. ἀλάβαστρα, phials. Among the presents sent by Cambyses to the King of Ethiopia was μύρου ἀλάβαστρον (Herod. iii, 20). Cf Pliny N.H. xiii, 2 unguenta optime servantur in alabastris; Rich, *Dict.* The word occurs in the Gospels more than once.

115-18. εῖδοτα, cakes; μολεύρῳ, meal. These cakes were fashioned in the shape of birds and beasts.

119. σκιάδες, bowers or canopies. Plutarch speaks of Cleopatra sailing up the Cnidus ὑπὸ σκιάδι χρυσοπάστῳ: 'she did lie/In her pavilion—cloth-of-gold of tissue—O'er-picturing that Venus where we see/The fancy outwork nature; on each side her/Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling cupids' (Shakesp. *A and C.* II, ii).

121. Calverley's version implies a different reading from that in the text—ἀεξαμενῶν instead of ἐφεζόμενοι.

123. Carved works, with an ivory group representing the rapture of Ganymede. ἄνω, in Veneris lecto. \*

125. 'Softer than sleep': V, 51; Headlam on Herondas vi, 71, and cf Virg. *Ecl.* vii, 45 muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba. Miletus was famous for its wool trade: Virg. *Georg.* iii, 306 Milesia vellera.

130-2. Πύρρά sc. θρίξ. Hom. *Od.* x, 279; Virg. *Aen.* ix, 181; Tibullus I, viii, 31. ἄνδρα, Adonis; viv, his image.

134. ἐπὶ...ἀνεῖσαι: the upper part of the dress (*κόλπος*) would fall

\*I have left ll. 123-8 as they are usually given (with Ahrens' ἄμα for ἄλλα), without any great confidence that they are correct. Platnauer (C.Q. xxi, 203) reconstitutes them, and his arrangement and interpretation are an improvement.

down to the ankles (σφύρα) over the girdle, which remained unfastened. [See a learned note on σφύρα, by Lake and Cadbury, in *Beginnings of Christianity* vol. iv, p. 34].

137. At Alexandria the ritual was as follows: the marriage of the Goddess and her human lover were celebrated one day, and on the next the women, attired as mourners, carried the image of the dead Adonis to the sea, where it was committed to the waves. Yet, as l. 144 shows, they believed he would return from the dark underworld. The death and the resurrection of Adonis were symbolic of the decay of vegetation in the winter and its revival in the spring. Consult Frazer *l.c.* ii, pp. 232 *sqq*; and cf Ovid *Metam.* x, 725 *luctus monumenta manebunt / Semper, Adoni, mei; repetitaque mortis imago / Annua plangoris peraget simulamina nostri; / At cruor in florem mutabitur.*

138. The wrath of Ajax against Ulysses (the result of their contest for the arms of the dead Achilles—a contest which Ulysses won) brought on madness (βαρυμάνιος). This led to Ajax's committing suicide. See the *Ajax* of Sophocles.

139-142. εἴκοστι, strictly nineteen. Pyrrhus (Neoptolemus), son of Achilles. Δευκαλίωνες, men like Deucalion. The Lapithae were a tribe of wild men who fought against the Centaurs (Keightley, *Classical Mythology*). The story of this mythical combat was so famous that it was depicted in sculpture on a metope of the Parthenon at Athens.  
ἄκρα, chiefs. So τὰ πρῶτα in Herodotus. Argos in Homeric times was the seat of chief power in Greece.

144. ἤνθες sc. φίλος.

145. The punctuation of this line is uncertain. If a note of exclamation is understood after σοφώτερον, the sense would be,—‘It’s really *too wonderful!*’ (viz. the whole performance of the *prima donna*); in that case there would of course be no stop after ἄ θήλεια.

'Theocritus brings us back at the close to the commonplaces of daily life' (Cholmeley).

147. There is a good parallel in the sixth mime of Herondas: 'My old man's ravenous (λαμάσσει), κῶρη ἡμῖν ἀφέρπειν ἔστι, and it's time for us to be on the move.'

148. ὅξος ἀπαν, like παιπάλημ' ὅλον ('all subtlety') in Aristoph. *Birds* 430.

149. ἀφίκευ, aorist indicative. Ἀδων: similarly Shakespeare uses both forms, Adonis and Adon, in his '*Venus and Adonis*'.

# THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

FROM THE GREEK OF BION

**O** WEEP for fair Adonis: he is dead.  
Dead is the fair Adonis, and the Loves  
Are joined in lamentation. Queen of Love,  
Sleep in thy purple raiment never more.  
Rise, dark-stoled in thy sorrow; beat the breast,  
Crying, 'The fair Adonis, he is dead.'

*'Weep for Adonis! all the Loves respond.'*  
Low on the hills he lies, our well-beloved,  
And down his smooth white side, gashed by the boar,  
The drops fall fast: above him Cypris wails.      10  
Beneath his brow the eyes wax dim; the rose  
Fades from his lips whereon that kiss ev'n now  
Is dying—kiss she never would forgo.  
Ah sweet that kiss to Cypris, though he lives  
No longer. But Adonis never knew  
His goddess-lover kissed him as he died.

*'Weep for Adonis! all the Loves respond.'*  
O cruel wound! but darker far the wound  
Within that goddess-heart. About him bay  
The dogs he cherished, while the Oread nymphs      20  
Cry, 'Woe!' But Aphrodite, with her locks  
Dishevelled, up and down amid the woods  
Wanders distraught—no sandals on her feet.  
And the thorns rend her as she passes on,  
Gathering a blossom from her blood divine.  
Then, with a cry, down the long forest-ways  
She is borne afar, lamenting, as she goes,

That sighs for him. Ah grievous now to see!

Heap flowers and wreaths upon him, though all flowers 90  
With him have faded—dead, as *he* is dead.

Lave him with Syrian unguents and with myrrh:  
Nay, perish myrrh and unguent, seeing that he  
Who was thy savour, now sleeps cold in death.

*‘Woe for Adonis!’ all the Loves respond.*

In vesture wrought of purple he reclines,—  
The delicate Adonis; while around  
The Loves stand weeping, shearing their bright locks  
Beside the corse. And one upon his shafts,  
One on his bow, is treading; one has loosed  
The sandal of Adonis. Others bring  
Fresh water in a golden bowl, wherewith  
To bathe his limbs; another from behind  
Is fanning fair Adonis with his wings.

*‘Woe for Adonis!’ all the Loves respond.*

Now every torch has Hymenaeus quenched,  
Rending each bridal garland. There is heard  
No sound of marriage hymn, but evermore  
A threnody to hush the note of joy.

The Graces mourn the son of Cinyras,  
Shrilling amain, ‘Adonis, he is dead!’  
E’en in the Underworld the Fates pour forth  
Their sorrow for Adonis. Chants they hymn;  
*He* heeds them not. Yet fain were *he* to hear;  
But dark Persephone fast bars the gate.

Cease, Cytherea, from thy plaint to-day;  
Thy lamentation cease. Another year  
Thy tears shall flow; let sorrow now have ending.

## NOTES

9. Shakesp. *V. and Ad.* 'The wide wound that the boar had trenched/  
In his soft flank.'

10. *Cypris*, a name of Aphrodite, from the island of Cyprus, the chief  
seat of her cult.

58. *Acheron*, one of the rivers of the Underworld. Cf Theocr. xv, 102.

59. *King*, Pluto. Cf Virg. *Georg.* iv, 469; Job xviii, 14.

68. Job xx, 8.

70. *Girdle*: cf Hom. *Il.* xiv, 214 for a description of the 'girdle of  
Aphrodite' (*cestus* in Latin).

79. Frazer, *Adonis Attis Osiris* vol. i, 226.

86-9. Milton *Comus* 998-1002.

98. Ezekiel xxvii, 31; Ovid *Am.* iii, ix, 7; Robertson Smith, *Religion  
of the Semites*, pp. 323 *sqq.*

106. *Hymenaeus*, the god of marriage.

The reader of the 15th idyll of Theocritus, and the Lament of Adonis, will find some appropriate remarks in Matthew Arnold's 'Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment', in the first series of his *Essays in Criticism* (1865).

